ABILENE REFLECTOR

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## MY DEAR FRIEND.

Adown the vale of Life together
We walked in spring and winter weather,
  When days were dim, when days were bright;
My friend of whom God's will bereft me,
Whose kind, congenial spirit left me
  And went forth in the Unknown Night.

I saw his step grow more invalid,
I saw his cheek grow pallid—pallid,
  Wither like a dying rose;
Until at length being all too weary
For Life's rude scenes and places dreary,
  He bade farewell to friends and foes.

This is his grave: The spring with flowers
Bestrews it in the morning hours,
  Her rarest roses o'er him bowed;
And summer pauses to deplore him,
And weeping Winter arches o'er him
  Her solemn drapery of cloud.

He was not faultless: God who gave him
Life, and Christ who died to save him
  Sent Sorrow, wherewith he was tried;
And if as I, who loved him, name him,
There should be heard a voice to blame him,
  May we not answer: Christ hath died!

Ah, verily! * * * I fancy often
I see his kindly features soften—
  I mark his melting eye grow dim,
While Hunger, with its pained appealing,
Its want and woe and grief revealing,
  Stretched its imploring palms to him.

He can not answer now: He never,
In all the dim, vast, deep Forever,
  Shall speak with human words again,
He can not hear the song birds calling;
He can not feel the spring dews falling,
  Nor hear the winter winds complain.

Deep is his sleep: He would not waken
Though earth were to her center shaken
  By the loud thunders of a God.
Though the strong sea, by tempest driven,
With wailing waves rock earth and Heaven,
  He would not answer from the sod.

So be it, friend. A little while hence,
And in the dear, deep, dreamless Silence;
  We too shall share thy couch of rest,
When we have trod Life's pathways dreary,
Kind Death will take the hands grown weary,
  And gently fold them o'er the breast.

Sleep on, dear friend! No marble column
Gleams in the lights and shadows solemn
  Over the grasses on thy grave;
But flowers bloom there—the roses love thee;
And the tall oaks that tower above thee
  Their broad, green banners o'er thee wave!

Sleep, while the weary years are flying;
While men are born, while men are dying;
  Sleep on thy curtained couch of sod,
Thine be the rest which Christ hath given;
Thine be the Christian's hope of Heaven;
  Thine be the perfect peace of God!

—*F. L. Stanton, in Smithville (Ga.) News.*

## THE WRONG STATION.

### A School-Ma'am's Blunder and Its Happy Results.

The afternoon train that connected some lonely, obscure towns in Maine with the rest of the world, was over two hours late. The premature darkness of a stormy winter's night had set in comparatively early in the afternoon, and, though it was barely seven o'clock, it seemed to the few weary passengers as though they had been traveling half the night.

There were two representatives of the gentler sex present, but one, I am almost tempted to say (and I think the conductor and brakeman would bear me out in my distinction); for while one, a shy, timid girl of nineteen or twenty, had quietly gone to sleep, the other, a lady of great asperity of voice and demeanor, would neither go to sleep herself nor render this comforting performance possible to any one in her immediate vicinity, but persisted in administering large pieces of her mind to the aforesaid conductor and brakeman concerning the delay of the train, and their shameful complicity with the storm that caused the delay.

When at last the brakeman threw open the door, in a slow, despairing way that showed great depression of spirit, and called out something that began with Hunter's and ended in a mournful, inarticulate howl, he brightened visibly at seeing the severe lady start up with a jerk and gather up a collection of heterogeneous parcels with an air of relief which, oddly enough, immediately communicated itself to the rest of the passengers.

He helped her off the train with a cheerful alacrity that was not apparently abashed by the icy contempt she unmistakably entertained for the railroad and every one connected with it from the president to the water boy.

The conductor promptly swung his lantern to signal the engineer, called out briskly, "all aboard," and sprang on to the moving train without stopping to notice that his ex-passenger was in a state of violent dissatisfaction over the trunk.

May Smith, the girl who had been asleep, started up with a bewildered air as the train left the station, thrust her hand into her pocket to see if her purse was still there, and pressing her face close to the window-pane, against which the whirling snow dashed and clung, tried to make out something of the landscape.

It was of no use; the window refused to do any thing more than to give back an image of a homesick girl with a tired, white, scared face, and also that of her near neighbor, a gentleman of such on exaggerated bucolic appearance that he seemed the caricature of himself.

She was afraid that she had been carried past her station, and made a little timid, irresolute movement toward addressing the formerly dejected brakeman, who now passed through the car, actually whistling the frollicking air of "Begone, Dull Care."

He passed by without noticing her slight movement, and a sudden recollection kept her from repeating it.

The aunt with whom she had lived ever since she could remember, had always emptied her largest vials of concentrated wrath on the heads of those girls who tried to "attract attention."

Fearing lest by an unnecessary question she herself might be classed with these reprehensible delinquents, she made no second attempt, but leaned back in her seat an unresisting prey to loneliness and foreboding.

She had never before been out of the quiet little town of Massachusetts, where she had lived with her aunt until the death of the latter forced her to find some means of earning her own living.

Having had some correspondence with the "hiring" committee of a district school in a small village in Maine, she was now on her way to have her fate decided by the examining committee.

As her mind was firmly made up before leaving home that she could never return if she were disgraced by not passing her examination, and as her stock of money was not sufficient to hold out against any extended siege of expenses while she was waiting reinforcements in the shape of employment, her depression was not wholly unfounded.

The train soon came to another halt, the brakeman again roared out something that began with Hunter's and ended in some unintelligible syllable. May's face lighted up when she heard the name, and, starting up, she grasped her shabby, old-fashioned carpet bag with one hand, felt nervously in her pocket with the other, to make sure that her purse had not been abstracted within the last two minutes by any of the listless passengers, and hurried to the door.

The train had stopped at a little flag station, whose only accommodation for passengers was a small platform, at present covered with snow.

As May hesitated an instant on the car steps, a tall figure seized her, and carrying her across the platform deposited her in the sleigh, and the train moved off before she could recover from her surprise enough to ask timidly: "Where's my trunk?"

"You don't mean to say that I'm such an idiot that I've let the train go off an' carry off your trunk?" demanded the tall man in tones of poignant disgust.

"I don't see the trunk anywhere," she answered, ignoring the question of the stranger's imbecility.

"Wal, I snum," said her disconcerted companion, "you must think I'm the goldern—the biggest gump you ever come acrost. There wa'nt nothin' in it you wanted, was they?" he asked, as though people were in the habit of traveling with baggage for which they had no earthly use.

"Yes," she admitted, "every thing I have was in it, except what I have in this bag."

"Jewhitaker!" exclaimed the other, "ef you'd only chuck somethin' at me to pay for bein' such a loon, I'd feel better. I spose, though, you hain't got nothin' you want to waste on such a fool."

"You see it snowed, so I didn't much expect ye, though of course I'd hev come ef it had snowed bilin' water, an' ez I'd been a-waitin' for ye nigh on to three hours, I was so consummedly tickled to think you come I didn't stop to think about nothin' else. Can you git along without it to-night!"

"O, yes," she answered, "I don't care, if it isn't lost."

"Then that's all right," he said in a greatly relieved tone, getting in the sleigh beside her. "I'll get it for ye to-morrer ef I hev to overhaul every train in the State with my own hands. G'long!"

The horse moved a little, but refused to start.

"Git up!" he called louder, "what ails ye!" Then in a different tone he exclaimed: "Wal, by gracious! ef I ain't the biggest fool thet ever—I don't know what—I ain't unhitched the critter!"

While the crestfallen stranger proceeded to remove this slight obstacle to their locomotion, May burst into hysterical laughter.

"I don't blame ye none for laughin'," he said. "I shouldn't find no fault ef ye said you wouldn't ride one step with such a knownothin' ez I be."

As there was no house in sight, and the snow was nearly two feet deep and still falling, no inviting alternative seemed to present itself, and he got back into the sleigh, saying plaintively: "I ain't always this way, but I was so bejiggled at seein' ye I don't seem to know whether I'm a-foot or a-horseback."

May was too bewildered and frightened to make much reply to the stranger's self-accusations.

She supposed that he was the "hiring committee" who was to meet her at Huntersville, where he lived, and take her to his home, where she was to board, but her natural timidity and morbid fear of doing any thing to "attract attention" kept her from asking any questions.

The night was very dark. A lantern hanging on the dashboard cast grotesque shadows of the horse on the roadsides, from which, now a snow drift, now an evergreen loaded with snow, apparently leaned forward for an instant, and then drew back into impenetrable gloom.

A vague sense of horror added itself to the homesickness of the trembling girl.

Perhaps the man beside her was no common-place committeeman at all—indeed this executive stranger was very unlike the ideal committee to whom she had sent her little re-written, re-punctuated letters, fearful lest his critical eye would discover some unpardonable grammatical error which would make her timid aspirations toward the dignity of a school ma'am absurd in his sight.

Perhaps he might be some robber who inhabitated the fastnesses of these gloomy mountains, who had left her trunk for some not very obvious reason of his own, and who would shortly add the contents of her bag and purse to his ill-gotten spoils. His features were not visible in the darkness and might wear an expression of inconceivable ferocity, but the tones of his voice were so sensible, kindly and whole-souled that she felt an unaccountable sense of comfort and security whenever he spoke, though in the long intervals of silence that fell upon them as they journeyed slowly and laboriously through the snowdrifts and darkness, her fears could hardly be controlled.

"You're a little thing, ain't ye?" he finally remarked, abruptly.

"Yes," she faltered, feeling that he might consider this an insurmountable obstacle in the way of her managing the big boys in school.

"Would that be any objection?"

"Land, no," he responded, reassuringly. "I like little women."

May had a dim, undefined feeling that when a school was regulated by the likes and dislikes of the committee, there was an imperative call for civil service reform somewhere.

A wild and improbable tale she had once heard of a school committee who always insisted on kissing all the female teachers flashed across her mind along with a vague fear that this man beside her might resemble him in this respect, but she blushingly dismissed it as an immodest suggestion, unworthy of any decorous imagination.

Presently her companion, after clearing his throat several times preparatory to speaking, but not being able to carry his conversational attempts further than an abashed "Gid dap" to his horse, began with a manifest effort and much unaccountable confusion and embarrassment, which he tried vainly to conceal by interpolating various remarks of encouragement to his horse: "I've got your letters an' you've got mine—g'lang—an' I'm suited an' pleased ez—ez—gid dap—but, ef you haint, all you've got to do is just to say—git out of that—the word, an' I shan't find no fault—what yer doin'—nor blame you none. I'm a kind man—do yer want me to hit yer again—ef I do say it—what ails yer!—an' I don't think you'll ever be sorry, but ef you should wanter—tend to yer bizness—back out, I wish you'd say so soon's you can convenient.

May listened to this incoherent harangue with a deepening of the confusion and alarm with which this whole adventure inspired her. She wished, for not the first time, that she had never thought of teaching school, but she answered bravely: "I don't know why I should withdraw now, if I am considered suitable for the place."

"Thet's the way to talk," responded the other, with great cheerfulness, "an' here we be to home."

The forlorn would-be school ma'am was again taken in strong arms, carried through the snow, and this time deposited in a queer little room, with a blazing open fire, presided over by an awkward boy who was the only occupant of the room.

"Here she is," said her host to the boy, "an' now take the horse—he ain't quite tuckered—an' go after the minister quick. He said he'd come, rain or shine, an' he's got to."

The examining committee in her native village had always been the minister, and she realized with a sinking heart that this energetic man determined to have the questions of her eligibility for the school decided this very night.

"You'd ruther hev him come to-night?" he asked, seeing something of her feeling in her face.

"Why yes," she gasped, "I suppose the sooner it's over the better."

"I kinder thought you'd sorter ruther hev him come to-night," he returned, relieving his easily aroused embarrassment by poking the fire vigorously. "D'you ever read that awful comical book—derned ef I can remember the name of it—I wish you could hev read it, you'd died a-laughin'. I can't remember how it all went, but there was one feller, he was a-talkin' to the minister, and sez he to himself, sez he—the minister, you know—I like you, pard! an' I'll lick any feller thet don't. Wal, them's my sentiments exactly. I'm an awful homely lookin' feller, ain't I?" he asked, with sudden irrelevance.

May looked at him squarely for the first time.

He had taken off his fur cap and coat and stood before her, a blonde giant. But in his candid blue eyes and on his large rudely cut features was an expression so akin to the kindly, hearty tones of his voice that the reassured girl felt that he was no mountain brigand.

"Why, no, I don't think you are," she replied after conscientious deliberation.

"I think you're pretty as a picture," he said, boldly. "I do, honest."

May's face grew hot with shame and indignation.

At last her bold, unmaidenly actions in corresponding with a stranger was bearing its bitter fruit. She seemed to hear her aunt's thin, sarcastic voice say: "Men know who they can say those things to."

"Where is this man's wife?" May thought. "Is she offended because I wrote to her husband and said nothing about her?" She grew cold at the thought.

"I don't want you to say any more such things to me," she plucked up courage to say.

"Why, I ain't agoin' to," he said, in a tone of alarm. "I hain't no such thought. Don't be mad with me," he added, pleadingly. "Why, here, I hain't asked you to take off your things nor hev nothin' to eat. I hain't got no manners."

He got her some cake and tea, and then with real delicacy left her alone until the minister came. The minister's wife accompanied him, and she came into the front room to May, leaving her husband and the man of the house in the kitchen.

"I was determined to come if it did rain," she exclaimed, kissing May effusively. "Isn't it so romantic; just like a story, your coming way up here. Well, I think you've done well. I suppose you're a little nervous; I was."

"Did you ever teach school?" asked May.

"Why, yes. I taught one term once," replied the visitor, looking as if she considered the remark irrelevant.

"It was too bad about your trunk, wasn't it? Never mind, your dress is plenty good enough. Well, if you're all ready I'll call in the men. You don't feel faint, do you?"

When the minister came in May rose and stood before him like a child at school. Her heart beat so fast and such a mist came before her eyes that she did not realize that her host was standing beside her.

She made a terrible effort to grasp all the rules of grammar, arithmetic, geography, and spelling at once, and felt to her dismay that her brain was in a state of complete chaos.

The minister cleared his throat—"The State," he began slowly.

"Geography is the first thing," she thought, and tried to get an instantaneous picture in her mind of the entire earth and all its diversions, but all she could think of were the names of Mount Popocatapetel and the river Yang-Tse-Kiang.

"The state of matrimony is one ordained by God for the purpose of—"The minister had got so far, when he paused, arrested by the look of horror and amazement on the girl's face, and her companion thinking the blank was for him to fill out, ejaculated in loud firm tones, "I do."

"Stop! quick!" cried the girl "there is some mistake."

"You can't expect me to say it just right the first time," said her host, realizing that he hadn't responded in quite the right place, but you'd orter make some allowances, seein' I never was married before."

"Married!" she cried, recoiling from him, "I came up here to teach school, and you know I did. I know my aunt would have said it was a dreadful venturesome thing to do, but no one has any right to marry me, if I did."

"But, my dear young lady," said the puzzled minister, "Tom—Mr. Hunter, has made a confidant of me from the first and he surely understood that you were to marry him."

"I advertised for a wife, you remember," said the crestfallen Mr. Hunter, turning to her, "and you answered it——"

"I did not," cried May, indignantly. "I wrote to Mr. Hilliard, of Huntersville, for a school."

"There is a Mr. Hilliard at Huntersville," said the minister.

"This is Hunter's Point," said the minister's wife, who had been trying vainly to get in a word.

"I must have got off at the wrong station," gasped May, sinking into a chair. "I have made a terrible blunder."

"It does seem to be a dreadful mixed up mess, but p'raps we can straighten it out, said Mr. Hunter, dolefully. Isn't your name Maria Smith."

"My name is May Smith," she answered, rather shortly.

"Now look here, my dear," cried the minister's wife, "this is rather awkward, I know; but I think I can find a way out of the labyrinth. My name is Mrs. Seavor—we'll begin at the very beginning—and Mr. Seavor is an ordained minister come up here to marry you, May Smith, to Tom Hunter, one of the best fellows that ever lived. Now," said she, clapping her hands enthusiastically, "why can't we have the wedding after all? I'll vouch you'll never get a better husband if you search the wide world over. I know you don't know him, but I'll guarantee that you'll never be sorry."

"If you only will," said Mr. Hunter, pleadingly; "I've taken such a shine to you."

"My friends," said Mr. Seavor, "I dislike very much to interfere with the romantic procedure that Mrs. Seavor has laid out."

"I never could consent to it, never," interrupted May.

"In any case," he continued, "it is my duty to remind you all that Mr. Hunter has agreed to marry some one, and the lady in question would have cause to think herself unfairly treated if he married any one else."

Mr. Hunter groaned as he perceived the cogency of this reasoning.

"I'll do the square thing by her," he said, "but I was never so disappointed in my life."

Mrs. Seavor staid that night with May, keeping her awake until nearly morning to listen to the praises of Mr. Hunter.

"If you can't find her," said Mrs. Seavor in the morning to Mr. Hunter and May, as they started to drive over to Huntersville in search of her school and his stray betrothed, "if any thing happened to her—though most likely there hasn't—things never do happen the way we want them to, except in books—but if they should, just bring May right back to my house for dinner, and we'll have just the prettiest wedding that ever was—in spite of her"—she added, meaning the absent Maria Smith.

From which it will be seen that the unconquerable Mrs. Seavor, although a minister's wife, let her sympathies run away with her sense of abstract right and justice.

The morning was bright and mild, but the ride was a very silent one.

Mr. Hunter wore an expression of suffering and resolution that would have done credit to a mediæval martyr.

Mrs. Hilliard met them at the door, "Wal, yes," she admitted, "there was a lady there who came on the train the night before, the new school ma'am, an' she guessed she'd hev a pretty good gover'ment—she's got the snap to her. Yes, they could see her," and she ushered them into the presence of May's fellow traveler of the day before.

"Is this Maria Smith?" asked Tom, in a tone that showed he feared the worst.

"It is," ejaculated that personage, resentfully.

"I thought so," murmured Tom, gloomily. "There's been some mistake, Miss; this little girl's come up here to teach school and made a mistake an' got off——"

"Will you shut your mouth, you ninny," snapped Miss Maria, with such asperity that instead of complying with her request Tom stood with it wide open.

"If Mary Smith," she went on, scornfully, "has made a mistake, that's her lookout—though I guess she didn't make no mistake—she knew what she was about fast enough. I found that I was expected to teach school and that's just what I'm goin' to do; and as for you, you blundering know-nothing, if you ever open your head and say I didn't come here to teach school, and found there wasn't any fool of a man here to meet me, as he'd agreed to, I'll have the law on you."

As the two guilty culprits hurried toward the door, Miss Maria added, witheringly, that she hoped "this would be a lesson to him not to trifle with a gentle, loving, trusting heart—meaning her's—again."

"There's a trunk here I've no use for," she called after them.

"I ain't a callin' no names," said Tom, solemnly, as they drove off, "but there's such things as narrer escapes! And now we'll go back to Mrs. Seavor's—you know what she said."

"Mr. Hunter," said May, tearfully, "I must go home. Please take me to the depot."

"Home! Git out!" said Tom, incredulously; "I can't give you up now."

"You say this because you pity me for losing my school," she faltered.

"No, I don't, honest," he exclaimed; "but I love you, darling, an' ef you'll only marry me I'll stan' by yer thro' thick an' thin, ez long ez we both do live."

She lifted her eyes to his and saw the love and comfort he offered her in vivid contrast to the lonely, troubled life she would lead without him. The horse, judging by the loose-hanging reins that not much was expected of him, stopped and gazed pensively at the bright, snowy landscape. A strange, conscious silence fell on the two in the sleigh.

"I'm afraid," said May, shyly, "that if we stay here we'll be late to dinner with Mrs. Seavor!"—*Ethel Gorham Clarke, in Chicago Inter Ocean.*

## DIVERSIFIED FARMING

### The Only System of Agriculture Which Pays in the Long Run.

Whatever success may have attended the efforts of those who have made some particular line of farming a specialty, it is found that, sooner or later, such a system must be abandoned. At one time, because of its importance, cotton was the principal crop of the South—cotton was king—but the effect upon the agriculture of that section was not such a one as might have been desired.

With regard to some portions of New England, the same may be said of tobacco; when prices were high and there was a lively demand, in the Connecticut valley all other crops were considered of secondary importance as compared with tobacco, and, as a result, the soil was injured to a very great degree by the unnatural demand that was made upon it.

It is quite natural, so long as there is a demand for any particular crop at good prices, to continue its cultivation without giving a thought to the possible consequences that may result in the unbalancing of the natural elements of nutrition. Where the soil is new, or has been subjected to cultivation for a comparatively short time, as is the case upon the Western prairies, where there appears to be an almost unlimited supply of plant food, successive cultivation of the same crop may be indulged in with less danger, but it must be remembered that in the most fertile soil there is a healthy proportion of the elements of nutrition.

A soil may be possessed of an almost exhaustless supply of nitrogen and phosphoric acid, and yet be so deficient in potash as to render the soil largely unavailable; it is a cultivation of crops that draw heavily upon the soil for any one important element of nutritiou that soon renders them poorly adapted to the growth of any crop that requires a free supply of the exhausted element. It is for this reason that many of the most intelligent farmers believe that a proper rotation of crops is necessary to maintain a good healthy fertility of soils; this condition is of the utmost importance, not only in the production of the then growing crop, but also for the successful cultivation of future crops. Not long since we noticed a statement that a farmer had been very successful in producing crops by the use of commercial fertilizers alone, and so long as crops were cultivated and the fertilizer was applied, every thing was all right, but upon seeding to grass there was a failure.

Now, it appears that crops can be grown upon a soil for a number of years with very satisfactory results by the use of commercial fertilizers, but when it comes to seeding to grass there is a failure to respond that is objectionable to every farmer.

It is probable that a rotation of crops, pursued with intelligence, is much more profitable to most farmers than the attempt to succeed with one crop. This, then, requires diversity, and affords a smaller chance for failure than by any one-crop method. It is very seldom that all crops should go begging for a market, and yet how often is it the case that the abundance of some one crop renders it undesirable.

Eastern farmers have been, perhaps from necessity, compelled to adopt a system of farming adapted to the surface of the country, a condition that has has had its advantages as well as its disadvantages, and to-day the average New England farmer will be found carrying on a little of nearly every kind of farm industry. In the first place he has his variety of crops of vegetables and grains; while making no pretensions in the line of breeding, he will raise his colts, his calves, his pigs, his poultry, his bees and so on in the line of live stock; then you will find him engaged in growing fruit, fattening beef and pork, and so on through the the various directions of farm industry, and if he does not amass wealth, he secures an honest living and saves a little for time of need. It may be that great undertakings are more likely to secure riches if that is the chief end aimed at, but even then failure or disaster is liable to come.

Contentment is a point of much importance to the farmer, and in the practice of that his mind must not be turned to the rapid accumulations of manufacturing capitalists.—*Wm. H. Yeomans, in N. Y. Observer.*

### Chemistry of the Laundry.

The laundress will find it useful to "paste this in her hat." Thirty yards of cotton cloth may be bleached in fifteen minutes by one large spoonful of sal soda and one pound of chloride of lime dissolved in soft water; after taking out the cloth rinse it in soft cold water, so that it may not rot. The color of French linen may be preserved by a bath in a strong tea of common hay. Calicoes with pink or green colors will be brightened if vinegar is put in the rinsing water, while soda is used for purple and blue. If it is desired to set colors previous to washing, put a spoonful of ox gall to a gallon of water and soak the fabrics in the liquid. Colored napkins are put in lye before washing, to set the color. The color of black cloth is freshened if it is put in a pail of water containing a teacupful of lye.—*Good Housekeeping.*